

Transportation Committee Informational Hearing on ARRA

August 19, 2009

Testimony on Capitol Region ARRA Program

Capitol Region Council of Governments

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\$17,500,000 Available ARRA funds

100% % programmed

100% % scheduled for 2009 obligation

55% % scheduled for 2009 construction start

Status of Individual Projects in Capitol Region

Proj No.	Town	Project	Cost Estimate	Advertising Date	Construction Start Date
0118-0161	Rocky Hill	Main St resurfacing (1)	\$1,952,000	June 1, 2009	started Aug 10, 2009
0164-0232	Windsor	Day Hill Rd resurfacing	\$2,200,000	immediately (2)	October 2009
0076-0213	Manchester	Buckland Hills Drive resurfacing	\$3,410,000	immediately (2)	October 2009
0132-0128	South Windsor	Buckland Rd resurfacing	\$2,200,000	immediately (2)	October 2009
0023-0125	Canton	Farmington River Trail Phase 3	\$2,200,000	Oct 14, 2009	spring 2010
0063-0660	Hartford	Park Street improvements from Laurel St to Pope	\$3,565,000	Nov 18, 2010	spring 2010
0042-0309	East Hartford	Main St & School St resurfacing	\$2,260,000	Dec 16, 2009	spring 2010
		TOTAL	\$17,787,000		

(1) Low bid was substantially below cost estimate, so not all of the \$1,952,000 will be required.

(2) Authorization to advertise received & towns to advertise in next few days.

What was needed to succeed

DOT support: Com. Marie told staff in Dec. 2008 to plan for local projects (*letter attached*)

Early start: We started 2-3 months *early*

Right projects: we selected projects with high probability of success

- Met federal eligibility criteria
- Conformed to federal design standards
- Required minimal design review & no permits (mill & pave)
- Designs at semi-final to final phase.

Experienced town engineers: We had town engineers with lots of experience with federal programs

Coordination & cooperation: We had excellent cooperation among state, regional, local officials

Extra effort: All parties gave extra effort

Willingness to assume risk: Towns assumed the risk of starting early without guarantees of funding

Assessment of process

Faced extraordinary challenge:

- How to program \$17 million of projects in addition to normal annual program
- Still meet '**all**' federal requirements
 - *Even though federal officials tried to assist, they could not relax any Federal rules*
- Do so in less than one year when process normally takes 2-3 years
 - *Even a town-state agreement normally takes 6-9 months*

Met the primary challenge:

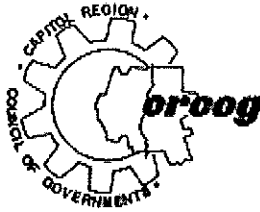
- Successful in compressing 2-3 year process into 4-8 months
- Required experienced town engineers, DOT support, effort & cooperation

What we did not achieve:

- Did not get projects to construction early in this construction season
- Expectations were high & probably somewhat unrealistic
 - *We asked our Congressional delegation not to impose 120-day deadline on MPOs*

What we learned:

- It is possible to drastically shorten the entire federal-state process
- Need to translate some of these lessons into permanent changes



Capitol Region Council of Governments

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Melody A. Currey, Chairman
Lyle D. Wray, Executive Director

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Joseph F. Marie, Commissioner
Connecticut Department of Transportation
2800 Berlin Turnpike, P.O. Box 317546
Newington, CT 06131-7546

SUBJECT: Expeditious Processing of ARRA Projects

Dear Commissioner Marie:

I want to thank you and your staff for the expeditious manner in which you are processing local projects funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. With the Department's support, we programmed and scheduled seven local projects worth \$17.6 million within the 12-month ARRA deadline. Not only are we assured of expending all of our available funds within the ARRA deadline, but most it will be awarded to contractors this construction season. Five of the seven projects are scheduled to start construction this summer or fall.


Without the Department's commitment to advance local projects in a timely manner, none of this would be possible. The Department is doing an outstanding job of finding creative and effective ways to expedite projects at a time when the number of projects that must be processed is nearly doubled.

You and your staff are to be commended for efficient management of the ARRA program. We are especially appreciative of the efforts of key managers such as Deputy Commissioner Jeff Parker, Tom Harley, Charlene Casamento, Charlie Barone, Seb Sbacio, Mario Marrero, and Julie Georges. We recognize and appreciate the extra effort and creative thinking required to reduce a typical three-year project development process to one that takes only 4-8 months. We are grateful for this level of commitment to local projects.

I have attached a list of our seven ARRA projects that includes information on the status of each. The list also includes two additional projects that were selected as reserve or substitute projects for the ARRA program. They were intended to be substituted for any of the first seven projects that were unable to meet the ARRA deadlines. While substitution does not appear to be needed, we are continuing to advance these projects through our STP Urban program. As with the first seven projects, the two substitute projects are advancing on schedule due largely to the efforts of your staff.

Thanks again for your commitment and leadership on this issue.

Sincerely,


Melody A. Currey
Chair, CROC Policy Board
Mayor, Town of East Hartford

Thank you!

Copies: Governor Rell, Jeff Parker, Lyle Wray

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